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THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE CONTINUING EDUCATION OF THE BAR – SOME PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS*

By RAPHAEL J. MOSES, Alamosa, Colorado
President-Elect of the Colorado Bar Association

Because of President McHendrie's inability to attend, I was privileged to be part of a conference sponsored by the American Law Institute and the American Bar Association at Arden House, Harriman, New York, December 16-19, 1958.

There were 110 persons in attendance, representing each of the state bar associations, some of the major city associations, and several of the nation's law schools. William Hedges Robinson Jr., of Denver, representing the University of Denver College of Law, was the only other representative from Colorado.

The final statement of the conference was "that national responsibility to stimulate a broader program of continuing legal education should rest with the existing Joint Committee on Continuing Legal Education composed of members of the two sponsoring associations, but that, in the last analysis, the responsibility for the entire program in each state rests with the organized bar of the state."

It was conceded that valuable programs already exist in many states, but that in the future these programs should give increased emphasis to the professional responsibility of the organized bar, while continuing with the so-called "bread and butter" portions of the program.

Everyone agreed that the program should be expanded, and many suggested that it could only be expanded through the aid of a full-time, adequately compensated professional staff, such as the staff that supervises the very extensive California program. Although many of us from the sparsely settled states of the West would like to see this objective accomplished, we thought that it might be some time before we could develop such an elaborate program, and that, in the meantime, we should do all we could to encourage and extend the existing program.

The important role of the law school in continuing legal education was noted, but the law schools themselves admitted that their staffs could not take on the general burden of continuing legal education in addition to their existing duties, but would be limited to special seminars and to cooperation with organized bar groups.

I think the technique of the conference, called the "American Assembly Plan," was interesting.

We were divided into five groups. In my group were twenty-one, from Massachusetts to Arizona, and from Oregon to Alabama. Five groups of leaders, each with a reporter, visited us in sequence, leading the discussions on five phases of the subject.

On the night of the 18th, the leaders and reporters prepared a consensus, which was vigorously debated the next day by the entire body, substantially amended, and finally released as a "Final Statement" of the Conference, with this lawyer-like admonition: "Although there was general agreement on the statement, the members of the Conference

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were not asked to affix their signatures; and it should not be assumed that every member necessarily subscribes to every recommendation included in the statement."

As a matter of fact, there was generally substantial agreement. Some of us thought more emphasis should have been directed to the continuing legal education of the newly-admitted lawyer; others of us thought that a professional staff was not "essential," but these were minor details.

Interspersed among our panel sessions were addresses by some of the giants of the profession. Judges Learned Hand, Charles Wyzanski and St. John Garwood are names familiar to all of us. Judge Hand, now in his *fiftieth* year on the federal bench, was the darling of the meeting. Judge Wyzanski, with the steel trap mind often referred to but seldom encountered, interrupted his contempt trial of Bernard Goldfine to come to the meeting, then returned to Boston, found the defendant guilty, and sentenced him to ninety days. Judge Garwood of the Supreme Court of Texas is no stranger to Colorado bar members, having been a speaker at a recent annual meeting.

The omnipresent alumni of Harvard College will be pleased to know that we heard from Dean Griswold, and some will recognize the name of John Lord O'Brian, of the Washington, D. C. bar, a man who has done much during his eighty-odd years to demonstrate the public responsibilities of lawyers. We also heard from Ross Malone, president of the American Bar Association, Harrison Tweed, president of the American Law Institute, and Robert J. Blakely, vice-president of the Fund for Adult Education, which fund paid the expenses of the conference.

To me, the greatest delight of the meeting came from renewal of acquaintance with friends from all over the country, and the opportunity to make new friends, and to learn how the problem of continuing legal education is being met in the other states. The wonderful fellowship which comes from living with leaders of the bar of the entire country for three days will linger long after some of the wisdom we received has departed.

Arden House itself deserves some mention. It is an ideal place for a conference. Only ninety-six could sleep in its forty-eight bedrooms, so a busload had to drive back and forth to the Thayer Hotel at West Point, the nearest town of any size.

Arden House is at Harriman, about forty-eight miles from New York, and was built by E. H. Harriman about the turn of the century. The music room, where the general meetings were held, will seat about 200. There are ninety-nine rooms altogether, including those Averill Harriman had added to the original home when he brought his bride there.

Averill Harriman gave Arden House and 100 acres surrounding it to Columbia University for just such conferences as ours, and it is in constant use. The actual housekeeping chores and food service are handled by the Treadway hotel chain under contract. The remaining 19,900 acres are still owned by Governor Harriman.

One interesting sidelight; when the gift was made to the University, it had to agree to continue to pay local property taxes—the town of Harriman would have gone under if Arden House went off the tax roll.

The Faculty and Students
of the
University of Denver College of Law



Extend their warm congratulations to
the University of Colorado Law School
upon the occasion of the opening of
the new law school building at Boulder.